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THE TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CALPURNII PISONES

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Besides recording a person's *tria nomina* and filiation, many Roman inscriptions also indicate to which of the 35 voting tribes the person belonged. This information can sometimes be useful in establishing a family's municipal *origo*, or in revealing additional clues about the family's history. The present study offers a minor revision in modern prosopography on the Calpurnii Pisones and tries to use this conclusion more generally to elucidate patterns of tribal membership among Roman aristocratic families.

The Calpurnii Pisones first appear in the sources at the time of the Hannibalic War when a C. Calpurnius Piso served as urban praetor in 211 B.C. In the next generation this man's homonymous son was the first member of the family to be consul (180 B.C.); it was during the family's third generation in the extant sources that the Calpurnii Pisones became well established among the Roman nobility as shown by the tenure of four consulships in the 16 years 148-133 B.C.: L. Calpurnius C. f. C. n. Piso Caesoninus (cos. 148), Cn. Calpurnius Piso (cos. 139), Q. Calpurnius C. f. C. n. Piso (cos. 135), and L. Calpurnius L. f. C. n. Piso Frugi (cos. 133).¹ The consul of 133 was the famous Roman annalist. As plebeian tribune in 149 he secured the passage of the *Lex Calpurnia de pecuniis repetundis*, and in 120 B.C. he became the first member of the family to hold the highly coveted office of censor. The family continued to be quite prominent during the late republic and was one of the more prestigious noble lineages of the principate.²

If one examines the indices of the *CIL* volumes for the various regions of Italy, one discovers that during imperial times the Calpurnian name was well represented throughout the peninsula. Although a few of these inscriptions contain the person's tribe, they are hardly relevant to the tribal membership of the Calpurnii Pisones, since they pertain to rather humble people, not connected with the noble Calpurnii.³ As can be seen from L.R. Taylor's list of late republican and early imperial senators whose tribes are attested, extant information tells us

¹ For the ancient evidence on these men's names, filiations, and consulships see T.R.S. Broughton's *MRR* I under the appropriate years. See the *stemma* accompanying this article for the early divergence of the Calpurnii Pisones into two *stirpes*, the Pisones Frugi and Pisones Caesonini.

² See, for example, R. Syme "Piso Frugi and Crassus Frugi," *JRS* 50 (1960) 12-20, and E.S. Gruen "Pompey and the Pisones," *CSCA* 1 (1968) 155-70.

³ Out of the numerous inscriptions from Italy containing the name of a Calpurnius, I have found only seven which contain the person's tribe. They are the following: *CIL* IX 4967 from Cures (a man belonging to the Collina, and his son to the Quirina, although Cures belonged to the Sergia), X 569 from Salernum (Quirina, although the city was in the Menenia), X 6496 from Ulubrae in Latium (Menenia, although the town's tribe was the Pomptina), XI 7494 from Falerii (Horatia), XIV 161 from Ostia (Quirina), and XIV 415 from Ostia (Voturia, the tribe of Ostia).

the tribe of only one Calpurnius, L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, consul of 58 B.C. and father-in-law of Julius Caesar.⁴ According to a senate decree of 44 B.C. preserved by Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* XIV 220), he belonged to the Menenian tribe. Herbert Bloch has argued that the so-called house of the papyri near Herculaneum, which contained many writings of the philosopher Philodemus, once belonged to this man, whom we know from Cicero to have been the patron of Philodemus.⁵ L.R. Taylor (*loc. cit.* [n. 4] 311) accepted Bloch's thesis and further pointed out that the Menenian tribe, to which Piso Caesoninus belonged, was also the tribe of Herculaneum after its enfranchisement following the Social War. She conjectured that the *tribus Menemia* was the original tribe of this man, and that after the Social War the Cinnan regime placed part of Campania in his tribe because of his family's supposed patronage of the area.

Epigraphical evidence from the principate can be used to improve this view. A series of funerary urns found outside the *Porta Collina* testifies to the existence of burial grounds for the Calpurnii Pisones during the late republic and first century or so of the empire.⁶ Two of the funerary inscriptions concern M. Licinius Crassus Frugi, the consul of 27 A.D., and his son Cn. Pompeius Magnus, the son-in-law of the Emperor Claudius.⁷ In both cases their inscriptions record them as having been members of the Menenian tribe.

Syme has done much to elucidate the complicated relationships between the Calpurnii Pisones, Licinii Crassi, and the Pompeii Magni in the early principate. Using an inscription from Lepcis Magna and other information, he has been able to show that the name of the consul of 14 B.C. was M. Licinius Crassus Frugi who was a Calpurnius Piso Frugi by birth, but was adopted by M. Licinius Crassus, the consul of 30 B.C. and the grandson of the triumvir Crassus (*loc. cit.* [n. 2] 13f. with *IRT* 319). Syme has further argued plausibly that the consul of 14 B.C. was initially the son of a man who was probably the son of M. Pupius Piso Frugi, the consul of 61 B.C.; and that the latter was by birth a grandson of the original Piso Frugi, the annalist and consul of 133 B.C., but he was adopted by a Pupius (*ibid.* 14f.). The consul of 14 B.C., M. Licinius Crassus Frugi, was the father of the homonymous consul of 27 A.D. The latter person married Scribonia, the great-great-granddaughter of Pompey the Great, and hence their son took the famous name Cn. Pompeius Magnus.⁸

These relationships clearly reveal that the Licinii Crassi and Pompeii Magni of the early empire were intertwined with the Frugi branch of the Calpurnii Pisones; and two of these people

⁴ L.R. Taylor, *The Voting Districts of The Roman Republic, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy at Rome* 20 (1960) 200.

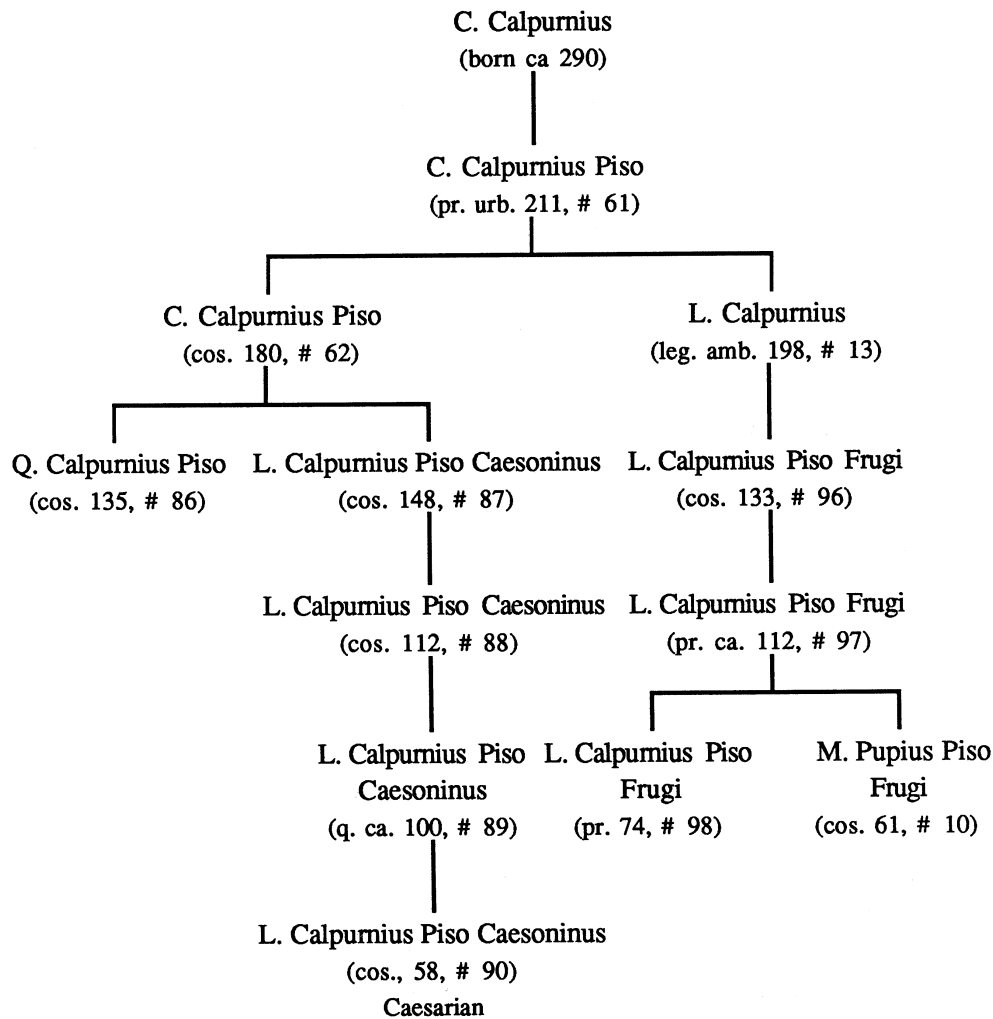
⁵ H. Bloch, *AJA* 44 (1940) 490-3. For Piso Caesoninus and Philodemus see Cic. *In Pisonem* 63 and 68-71 with *Ascon.* p. 16C.

⁶ *CIL* VI 31,721-31,727 + 1268, 1276, and many other funerary inscriptions of their freedmen, freedwomen, and slaves.

⁷ *CIL* VI 31,721 and 31,722. For Magnus' marriage to Antonia see Dio LX 5.7 and Suet. *Claud.* 27.2.

⁸ For these complicated family connections see table 5 of Syme's *Rom. Rev.*

Stemma of the Pisones Frugi and Pisones Caesonini



are known to have been members of the Menenian tribe. The son Cn. Pompeius Magnus could not have inherited his tribal membership through his mother since his father belonged to the same tribe; and furthermore, the tribe of Pompey the Great is known to have been the Clustumina (*CIL* VI 37,045.8 = *ILLRP* 515). The tribe of the Licinii Crassi is not known for certain, but Taylor thinks that the C. Licinius mentioned in the *consilium* of the *senatus consultum de Agro Pergameno* of 129 B.C. should be identified as C. Licinius Crassus, a plebeian tribune of 145 B.C. If she is right, then perhaps the tribe of the Licinii Crassi during the late

republic was the tribe of this man, the Teretina.⁹ If they retained their membership in this tribe during the early empire, then M. Crassus Frugi and his son could not have derived their tribal membership from this family. If Syme is right in supposing the consul of 14 B.C. to have been the natural son of M. Piso Frugi, the son of M. Pupius Piso Frugi the consul of 61 B.C., we can probably disregard the *Pupii* as being responsible for the Menenian tribal membership of M. Crassus Frugi and his son, since M. Pupius, the supposed adoptive father of M. Pupius Piso Frugi, is also mentioned in the *consilium* of the senate decree of 129 B.C., and his tribe is recorded as the Scaptia.¹⁰

On the basis of this information about various families' tribes, it would appear that the father and son, M. Crassus Frugi and Cn. Pompeius Magnus, derived their Menenian tribal membership from the Calpurnian family. This conclusion has interesting consequences for the early history of the family. It should be pointed out that M. Crassus Frugi and his son belonged to the Frugi branch of the Calpurnii Pisones rather than the Pisones Caesonini. As already noted, the only Calpurnius Piso whose tribe is known for certain is Piso Caesoninus the consul of 58 B.C. It therefore appears that both branches of the Calpurnii Pisones were members of the Menenian tribe.¹¹ If so, their common tribal membership should mean that it antedated the division of the family into these two branches. This would take membership in the tribe back to C. Calpurnius Piso the city praetor of 211 B.C. Thus Calpurnian membership in the Menenian tribe would appear to have lasted at least from the middle of the third century B.C. to the middle of the first century A.D. The family's tribal membership probably originated with the initial acquisition of Roman citizenship, about which nothing is known.

Unfortunately the original location of the *tribus Menenia* and its possible extension after the Latin War of 340-338 B.C. is unknown. Thus membership in the tribe can tell us nothing about the *origo* of the Calpurnii Pisones. The *-urn-* element in the family's name appears to be Etruscan. In fact, the two earliest extant attestations of the name in inscriptions come from Etruria and are written in Etruscan letters.¹² It is therefore noteworthy that during the first two generations of the family's known history two members are known to have performed official

⁹ Taylor (n. 4) 225 with *IGRRP* IV 262 = Sherk, *Roman Documents from the Greek East* (1969) 12. 29f. It should be pointed out that Teretina has been entirely restored in order to fill a gap of about nine letters (spelled Tereteina). Palatina, Voltinia, or Sabatina could occupy the same space, but Menenia is probably too short and therefore excluded from consideration.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* line 24. For the adoption see Cic. *De Domo Sua* 35 and Passerini *Athenaeum* n.s. 14 (1937) 252ff.

¹¹ This conclusion should be stressed since Taylor, as other modern scholars (see n. 4, 225), before Syme's article (n. 2) thought that M. Crassus Frugi, the consul of 27 A.D., was adopted by L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, the consul of 15 B.C. and the son of Caesar's father-in-law. Taylor therefore concluded that M. Crassus Frugi and his son derived their tribal membership from Caesar's father-in-law, apparently without realizing that he was a Piso Caesoninus and not a Piso Frugi.

¹² For the Etruscan formation of the name see W. Schulze, *Zur Geschichte lateinischer Eigennamen* (1900) 137-8, 178, 211, 244 and 260. *CIE* 2016 from Clusium, and *CIL* XI 7722 from Caere, both written retrograde.

duties in Etruria. The urban praetor of 211 served in Etruria as propraetor for 210-209, and his son was one of three colonial commissioners for establishing Graviscae in 181 in the territory of Tarquinii.¹³ On the other hand, during the late republic and principate the Calpurnii Pisones maintained that they were descended from the Sabine Numa Pompilius.¹⁴ The early presence of Calpurnii in the Sabine country gains some credence from the fact that three of the seven non-noble Calpurnii in Italy, whose tribes are known from inscriptions, belong to the tribe of the Sabines, the Quirina (see n. 3). A fragment of the annalist L. Piso Frugi concerning the novensile gods among the Sabines could possibly indicate personal knowledge of the area resulting from his family's association with it.¹⁵ An inscription indicates that around 200 B.C. a L. Calpurnius (possibly the father of Piso Frugi, the annalist) dedicated a small shrine to Feronia at Lucus Feroniae near Capena.¹⁶ Thus we may tentatively conclude from this conflicting evidence that the family came from the middle Tiber valley, where Etruria and the Sabine country bordered one another.

Although Pisonian membership in the Menenian tribe is not helpful in determining the family's precise geographical origin, their long-term membership in the tribe constitutes valuable evidence with which one of Taylor's primary operating assumptions can be tested. In chapter 13 of her *Voting Districts of the Roman Republic*, entitled "List of Republican Senators with Tribes," she sets forth, in alphabetical order according to *nomen gentilicium*, all extant evidence of the republic and first century A.D. (both literary and epigraphical) on senatorial families' membership in the various tribes. In the vast majority of cases we possess information on the tribal membership of only one person from any particular *gens*. Moreover, many of Taylor's entries and tribal attributions are based upon personal conjectures (sometimes quite dubious) as to the person's family's municipal *origo* and the person's membership in the tribe of his *patria*.¹⁷ Throughout the list she often assumes that *stirpes* of the same *gens* belonged to the same tribe over long periods of time.

¹³ For the propraetorship see Livy XXVI 28.6, XXVII 7.10, 21.6, and 22.13; for Graviscae Livy XL 29.1-2.

¹⁴ M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (1974) I 463 no. 446; Horace *Ars Poetica* 292 with the *scholion*; *Laus Pisonis* 3-4 and 14-15; Plut. *Numa* 21.2; Festus 41L s.v. *Calpurni*.

¹⁵ Arnob. *Adversus Nationes* III 38 = Peter *HRR*² I (1914) F 45: *Novensiles Piso deos esse credit novem in Sabinis apud Trebiam constitutos*. Trebia was the same name of a tributary of the Po in Cisalpine Gaul. Trebula was the name of four different places in Italy: two in Campania, and two in the Sabine territory. The latter two were Trebula Suffenas and Trebula Mutuesca.

¹⁶ R. Bloch and G. Foti, *Rev. Phil.* Serie III, 27 (1953) 71f. with figure 4 = *ILLRP* 93B and *ILLRP Imagines* no. 41. Trebula Mutuesca, mentioned in the previous note, was near Cures, the hometown of Numa Pompilius, and also had a cult of Feronia (*CIL* IX 4873ff.), as well as one of the novensile gods.

¹⁷ For example, on the basis of his *cognomen* and the depiction of T. Tadius and the rape of the Sabine women on his coins, Taylor (*loc. cit.* [n. 4] 260) postulates that L. Titurius Sabinus, a moneyer from the time of the Social War, came from the Sabine country, and perhaps even from Cures, the hometown of King T. Tadius. She therefore tentatively assigns this man to the Sergia, the tribe of Cures. For the evidence of other senators and their tribes discussed in the remainder of this paper, consult this chapter of Taylor (184-269) under the appropriate *nomen gentilicium*. I

Given the nature of the existing evidence, this latter assumption is difficult to corroborate. On the contrary, some of Taylor's evidence seems to refute it. As might be expected, the most fully documented families in Taylor's list are a few prominent noble *gentes* of the republic. The Aemilii, patrician Claudii, Cornelii, Papirii, and Sergii all gave their names to five of the 17 original rustic tribes. According to the surviving evidence no member of any of these families in later times belonged to the tribe derived from their *nomen*. Moreover, members of these families are known to have belonged to more than one tribe: Aemilii in the Palatina and Camilia; patrician Claudii in the Palatina, Lemonia, Pollia, and Arnensis; Cornelii in the Palatina, Romilia, and Stellatina; Papirii in the Clustumina, Quirina, and Velina; and Sergii in the Arnensis and Tromentina. Furthermore, a Sulpicius Galba is known to have been a member of the Aniensis, whereas a Sulpicius Rufus belonged to the Lemonia. The *gens Marcia* of Rome may have had members in both the Papiria and Teretina. Of the noble families from Rome itself, only the Sempronii are attested as having belonged to a single tribe, the Falerna.

In her summary analysis of the historical development of the tribes Taylor explained the dispersal of noble families into different tribes by postulating that during the fourth and third centuries B.C., as new territory was annexed and formed into new tribes, members of noble families were placed into these new voting units in order to become their patrons and thereby maintain the Roman nobility's control over the electorate (see *loc. cit.* [n. 4] 298f.). Otherwise, she regarded tribal membership in later times as being relatively fixed, and cited only the case of Cornelius Balbus of Gades as an example of someone who changed tribes. Besides the noble Sempronii of Rome, the Cocceii from Umbrian Narnia constitute the only other clear case in Taylor's list which bear out this view. A Cocceius senator from the triumviral period is recorded as having belonged to the Papiria, the tribe of Narnia itself and the tribe of the Emperor Cocceius Nerva. Although in the opinion of the present author many of Taylor's assumptions and conjectures about tribal membership seem highly speculative and in need of corroborating evidence, the long-term membership in the Menenian tribe of two different *stirpes* of the Calpurnii Pisones (not fully appreciated by Taylor herself) seems to provide additional support for her interpretation.

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